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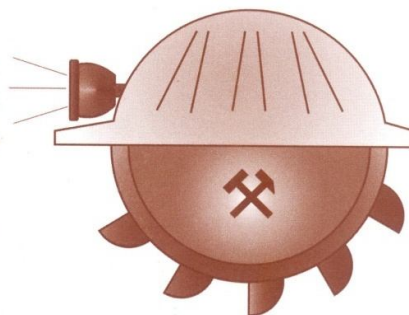
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“СВ. ИВАН РИЛСКИ” - София

свитък II: ДОБИВ  
И ПРЕРАБОТКА НА  
МИНЕРАЛНИ СУРОВИНИ

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OF  
UNIVERSITY OF MINING AND GEOLOGY  
“ST. IVAN RILSKI” - Sofia

part II: MINING AND  
MINERAL PROCESSING



**2009**

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## **РЕДАКЦИОНЕН СЪВЕТ** **на Свитък II: Добив и преработка на минерални суровини**

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## CONTENTS

Vladimir Danov	PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL GEO-TECHNOLOGY – NEW AND LEADING DIRECTION IN MINING SCIENCE DURING THE 21ST CENTURY	7
Ilian Djobov	CONDITION OF LIGNITE COAL MINING IN BULGARIA AND ROMANIA	13
Georgy Konstantinov	MODERN SYSTEMS FOR CONTROL OF MINING-TRANSPORT COMPLEXES IN OPEN CAST MINES	17
Tencho Kajrjakov Pavel Karacholov Atanas Smiljanov Violeta Ivanova	A NEW SAMPLING SYSTEM AND METHODS FOR COAL QUALITY CONTROL IN "MARITZA IZTOK" COMPLEX	21
Eugenia Alexandrova	A STRATEGY OF OPTIMAL SELECTION FOR RENEWAL THE BULLDOZER FLEET	25
Ivaylo Koprev	MULTIPURPOSE TECHNOLOGIES FOR PRODUCTION STONE BLOCKS CHAIN SAW "DIAMOND" WERE	31
Vladimir Danov	THE GEO-TECHNOLOGY SCIENCE AT THE MINING AND GEOLOGY UNIVERSITY "ST.IVAN RILSKI" – NECESSITY AND PERSPECTIVE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING FOR MINING ENGINEERS GEO-TECHNOLOGISTS AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL GEO-TECHNOLOGY	35
Krustyo Dermendjiev Georgy Stojanchev	UNDERGROUND MINING OF PROFILE MINERAL RESERVES OF AN OPENCAST MINE OF CONCESSION AREA	41
Asen Stoyanov	CONTEMPORARY CONSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPTIONS IN THE WOODEN FLOOR CONSTRUCTIONS IN THE HOUSING FIELD	49
Ventsislav Ivanov	RESEARCH IN THE RISK OF ROCK BURSTS AT THE MADANSKOTO ORE FIELD MINING	55
Susana Arad Victor Arad	STABILITY OF WASTE DUMPS, ISSUE OF MINE CLOSURE MONITORING PLAN FROM JIU VALLEY COAL BASIN	63
Ventzislav Ivanov	DETERMINATION OF COMPRESSIVE STRENGTH OF ROCK SAMPLES WITH SEMIREGULAR SHAPE	69
Violeta Ivanova	GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATION OF "TROYANOVO SEVER" OVERBURDEN LEVELS CLAYS AS A SERVICE ROADS FOUNDATION	73
Alexander Tzonkov Georgi Kolev	MOVEMENT NATURE EXAMINATION OF POINTS FROM NORTH NON-WORKING BORD OF OPEN PIT MINE "TROYANOVO-NORTH" BY MINE SURVEY OBSERVATION DATA	77
Georgy Trapov Georgy Mihaylov	APPLICATION OF THE FINITE ELEMENT METHOD IN CONDITIONS OF ALTERATION OF THE ROCKS PROPERTIES	85
Georgi Trapov Paulin Zlatanov	A SLOPE STABILITY OPTIMIZATION BY METHOD OF CASUAL SEARCH	91
Mihail Vulkov	MATRIX PRESENTMENT OF 3D KINEMATICAL PROBLEMS	95
Violeta Trifonova –Guenova	APPLICATIONS OF THE METHOD OF DISPLACEMENTS IN INVESTIGATING OF UNDERGROUND TRAPEZIUM-SHAPED FRAME DURING GENERAL DISPLACEMENT OF THE BASES	99
Mihail Vulkov	ABOUT AN ELASTOPLASTIC MODEL IN MINING SUBSIDENCE	103
Violeta Trifonova – Genova	STRESS CONDITION OF LAIRED ROCK MASSIF AROUND A VERTICAL CIRCULAR SHAFT	107
Violeta Ivanova	GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATION OF "TROYANOVO SEVER" PIT DUMP CLAYS AS A SERVICE ROADS FOUNDATION	111
Simeon Kostyanov S. Kocsárdi Z. Nagy P. Szolgay S. Akin Velislav Stoyanov	ARRAY COMPUTING BASED IMPLEMENTATION OF WATER REINJECTION IN GEOTHERMAL STRUCTURE	115

Julian Dimitrov	DIFERENTIAL TENSOR CALCULUS AT TRANSFORMING OF COORDINATE SYSTEM	121
Julian Dimitrov Tania Lyubenova	ANALITICAL FORMULATION AND OPTICAL INTERPRETATION OF DISCRETE PRESENTATION OF CONTINUOUS DEPENDENCES	127
Slavcho Lazarov Gergana Kamburova	RESEARCH OF RECENT ACCIDENTS INVOLVING EXPLOSIVES TRANSPORT AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	135
Gergana Kamburova	EFFECT OF THE OXYGEN BALANCE ON TOXIC GAS EMISSIONS AND VELOCITY OF DETONATION OF ROUGHLY DISPERSED AMMONITES FOR OUTDOOR OPERATION	143
Valery Mitkov	NEW DONOR CHARGES OF CAST BOOSTER TYPE OBTAINED FROM UTILIZED AMUNITION	147
Gergana Kamburova Georgy Georgiev	NEW ECOLOGICAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR HOLE BLASTING IN OPENCAST MINES AND QUARRIES	151
Valery Mitkov Gencho Genchev	DERERMINATION OF THE SAFE DISTANCES FOR WINDOW GLASSES OF BUILDINGS DURING DETONATION OF MAKESHIFT EXPLOSIVE DEVICES	157
Gergana Kamburova	STUDY OF THE HEAT STABILITY OF ROUGHLY DESPERSED AMONIONITRATE EXPLOSIVES	163
Hristo Stoev	AN APPLIED PROCEDURE FOR VALUATION LEVEL OF RISK BY PARTICULAR BLASTING IN SPECIFIC CONDITIONS	169
Orce Spasovski Risto Dambov	POSSIBILITIES FOR GROUND AND SURFACE WATER POLLUTION FROM THE LEAD AND ZINC ORE PROCESSING IN THE ZLETOVO MINES	175
Petya Gentcheva Marinela Panayotova	MEASURES TO COUNTERACT CORROSION OF WIRE ROPES USED IN A LEAD-ZINC MINE	179
Ivan Nishkov Lachezar Tsotsorkov Milka Krasteva Irena Grigorova	CHEMICO-MECHANICAL METHOD FOR DESTRUCTION OF FLOTATION FROTHS	185
Irena Grigorova Ivan Nishkov Margarita Vassileva Aleksandar Tasev	BROWN COAL BRIQUETTING WITH BINDING AGENTS	189
Neli Mintcheva	PLATINUM COMPLEXES WITH SILSESQUIOXANES – SYNTHESIS, CHARACTERIZATION AND PROPERTIES	195
Nedyalko Sofroniev	SYNTHESIS OF PHOSPHONIC ANALOGUES OF UNNATURAL AMINO ACIDS: I. 2-AMINO-3-[2-ARYL-1H-INDENE-1,3 (2H)-DIONYL]-ETHYLPHOSPHONIC ACIDS	201
Antoaneta Boteva Kristina Grozeva-Marhova Mariela Parashkevova	HUMUS ACIDS IN TURNAROUND WATERS FLOTATION FACTORIES	205
Nedyalko Sofroniev	SYNTHESIS OF PHOSPHONIC ANALOGUES OF UNNATURAL AMINO ACIDS: II. ESTERAMIDES OF 2-AMINO-2-DIETHOXYPHOSPHONYL-2-[2-SUBSTITUTED BENZYL METHYLENE-1H-INDENE-1,3 (2H)-DIONYL]-ACETIC ACIDS	209
Irena Spasova Marina Nicolova Stoyan Groudev	EXTRACTION OF COPPER AND PRECIOUS METALS FROM A SULPHIDE ORE BY MEANS OF A COMBINED BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL LEACHING	215
Andriy Blinov Olga Rudakova Vladimir Rafienko	NATURE AND ROLE OF INDUSTRIAL CLUSTERS IN MINING	219

## POSSIBILITIES FOR GROUND AND SURFACE WATER POLLUTION FROM THE LEAD AND ZINC ORE PROCESSING IN THE ZLETOVO MINES

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**ABSTRACT:** The Zletovo tailing dump formed to collect the tailings and other waste derived from the lead and zinc ore processing is situated close to the town of Probistip (Fig. 1). Its location and the direction of the tailings flow allow us to assume that ground and surface waters are polluted. The paper presents the results obtained from studies carried out on surface waters that receive the contaminated waters from the tailing dump.

The results obtained yielded increased concentrations of heavy metals such as lead, zinc, manganese, cadmium etc. in almost all samples particularly those collected in close proximity to the tailing dump.

**Key words:** Heavy metals, pollution, tailing dump, ore processing, MAC, the River Kiselicka, Zletovo, lead, zinc, manganese, cadmium.

### ЗАМЪРСЯВАНЕ НА ПОЧВАТА И ВОДИТЕ ПРИ ОБОГАТЯВАНЕ НА ОЛОВНО-ЦИНКОВИ РУДИ В НАХОДИЩЕТО „ЗЛЕТОВО“

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**РЕЗЮМЕ:** Хвостохранилището в Злетово, предназначено за оловно-цинкови отпадъци, се намира близо до гр. Пробиштип (фиг.1). Разположението му и потокът от отпадъци замърсяват почвата и водите в региона. Докладът съдържа данни за това замърсяване, свързано със съдържанието на олово, цинк, манган, кадмий и др. в почти всички взети проби в близост до хвостохранилището.

**Ключови думи:** Тежки метали, замърсяване, хвостохранилище, обогатяване, МАК, р. Киселика, Злетово, олово, цинк, манган, кадмий

### INTRODUCTION

The intensive development of industry and the increased exploitation of mineral raw materials are the reasons for large pollution of ground and surface waters as well as the whole

human environment. A number of reagents of various chemical composition and origin are used in the processing of lead and zinc ores. Most of the reagents are toxic and hazardous for the environment.



Fig. 1. Map of the survey area, SE Macedonia

The major source for ground and surface water pollution is the flotation waste material deriving from the flotation process discharged into the tailing dump (fig. 2).

Almost 90 per cent of the materials used in the technological enrichment process are discharged as effluent containing an average of 18 to 31 per cent solid phase.

The liquid phase is composed of highly mineralised waste water with increased concentrations of sulphates, heavy metals, phenols and other toxic materials.

The contents of waste materials depend on the kind, the amount of flotation reagents, the characteristics of the ore being processed and the enrichment process applied.



Fig. 2. Location of the old tailing dump and the new one called Skrdovo.

So far about 11.608.864 tons of flotation waste have been disposed of into the Zletovo tailing dump after the technological process. Now, the flotation tailing is discharged into the new Skrdovo tailing dump located in the River Kiselicka valley.

Preliminary investigation results of this type can be found in the publication from (Mircovski, Spasovski, at al. 2002[1]; Mircovski, Spasovski at al. 2004, [2]; Spasovski at al. 2007, [3]; Spasovski, Doneva, 2007, [4][5]).

#### Possibilities for ground water pollution

The most important environmental issue regarding storage of flotation waste in tailing dumps is the discharge of contaminated waters into ground and surface water courses. This issue is of particular importance with the Skrdovo tailing dump compared to the old tailing dumps that have been mostly restored nowadays. Impermeable surface layer has formed in some of the dumps that protects them from atmospheric water infiltration.

A small amount of water from the Skrdovo is sent back to the flotation plant by a pump facility, whereas the excess water is discharged into the nearest water course of the River Kiselicka.

In spite of all measures taken for control and improvement of water quality (decantation with several day settling), the water being discharged from the collector is contaminated. Part of drainage waters penetrate ground water courses causing aquifer pollution close to the tailing dump.

Ground water pollution is also caused by the Kiselicka surface waters since it is in direct hydraulic connection with the aquifers formed in the Topolka, Kiselica and Zletovska Rivers. Ground waters can also be contaminated from polluted surrounding land and waste dumps with dispersion of aggressive dust by wind currents. Rainfall seepage into such polluted land may become contaminated and cause ground water pollution.

Table 1. Results obtained from water sample analyses with (mg/l).

Sample	Pb	Zn	Cd	Mn	As	Ag	Cu
1	0.0011	0.062	0.002	0.011	0.006	0.005	0.006
2	0.0021	0.296	0.001	0.576	0.006	0.004	0.019
3	0.0146	3.167	0.027	30.89	0.042	0.008	0.078
4	0.191	0.835	0.015	3.78	0.048	0.02	0.061
5	0.0081	0.353	0.014	2.60	0.006	0.003	0.009
6	0.0088	0.215	0.002	0.569	0.034	0.006	0.004
Standard	0.03	0.2	0.01	1000	0.05	0.02	0.05

1. water from the Skrdovo tailing dump, 2. outflowing water from the tailing dump, 3 and 4. water from the Kiselicka, 5 and 6. water from wells.

Of particular interest are the high manganese concentrations in sample no. 3 (30.89 mg/l) collected from the River Kiselicka course close to the village of Neokazi. The reason for the high manganese concentrations in the river water is the tailing dump located close the river in which effluents are discharged after the operation process in the Zletovo Mine.

Increased zinc amounts were found in almost all samples, the highest being those collected from the River Kiselicka (3.176 mg/l). The increased concentrations are the result of waste water discharge from the operation process in the Zletovo lead and zinc processing in the mine and the proximity of the the tailing dump to the river.

Increased lead concentrations were found in samples 3 (0.146 mg/l) and 4 (0.191 mg/l).

It is obvious that increased lead concentrations appear in the same samples in which increased amounts of manganese and zinc were found. This justifies the concern for the increased effects of the tailing dump and the environmental pollution with metals derived from the operation of the Zletovo Mine.

Increased concentrations of copper were found only in the samples collected from the River Kiselicka. Copper concentrations in the samples collected from the river course are due to the presence of copper minerals (chalcopyrite) which is a common accompanying mineral to the lead-zinc mineralisation.

Special attention should be paid to cadmium, arsenic and silver concentrations.

In three samples cadmium was found in markedly increased concentrations relative to MAC. Increased cadmium concentrations were found in the river and in one sample

## Results obtained and discussion

In order to unravel the effects of tailing dumps on surface and ground water pollution with heavy and toxic metallic materials water samples were collected from the Skrdovo tailing dump, from the Kiselicka and from ground water wells beneath the tailing dump down stream the river bearing the same name. Studies were carried out in the Faculty of Mining, Geology and Polytechnic using the AES-ICP method. The results are given in Table 1.

collected from a well water close to the river. Increased cadmium concentrations were found in areas that have been polluted from zinc and lead .....

Only in two samples arsenic concentrations are close to MAC, but they are lower. Arsenic occurs due to the arsenopyrite which occurs as an accompanying mineral to lead - zinc mineralization in the Zletovo Mine.

Silver was found in all samples. Its concentrations are either close or lower than MAC.

## CONCLUSION

From the results obtained it can be inferred that surface and ground waters contain increased concentrations of a number of elements regarding III and IV class water standards (Table 1). Samples collected from surface waters, where the tailing dump has large and ground water pollution systematic analyses will be needed.

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